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Message from the Mayor

Just a few days before the anniversary commemorating the signing of the Declaration of Independence, the US House of Representatives voted to repeal one of the District's gun restrictions. By a vote of 259-161, the House voted to prohibit our city from spending funds to enforce a law that requires any firearms kept at a home to be unloaded and disassembled or bound by a trigger lock.

Some have called this vote "an extremely simple, common-sense...first step toward freer gun ownership." I call it an outrage and an outright denial of democracy to the residents of the District of Columbia. As Mayor of the District of Columbia, it is my responsibility to do what I think is best to provide for the public safety of our citizens. Any attempt at the federal level to pass a law or otherwise replace my judgment and our City Council's judgment with that of officials elected elsewhere is an indignity to the democratic process and our citizens.

This vote is a slap in the face to me and to the people who live in this city. People who live in Texas should no more impose their values on the people of the District than people who live in the Shaw neighborhood should impose their values on the people of Houston.

I am also offended by this effort because of the hard work I and others have invested in returning this city to financial stability and economic good health. We ended the reign of the Control Board, and we have worked diligently hand in hand with Congress to foster greater autonomy for the city with an eventual goal of full voting representation in Congress. A congressionally driven gun repeal takes us in the wrong direction.

I support our gun control laws because in my view, which is also the view of most of our citizens, any increase in the number of guns in the District will increase the likelihood that crimes will be committed with those guns. We have made significant progress in reducing crime, although we still have work to do.

It is inconceivable that Congress would encourage more people in DC to pick up a gun just when we are successfully convincing others to put down their guns. There are many ways for the federal government to work with local officials. Our public safety agenda is community-based and ought to be supported by Congress, not undermined.

As we wait to hear from the Senate on this measure, the citizens of the District of Columbia want nothing more than other American citizens would demand and get: the right to make our own decisions about our public safety.





Anacostia Gateway Groundbreaking

On June 28, I attended the groundbreaking ceremony for the Anacostia Gateway, a new office building located at the corner of Martin Luther King, Jr. Avenue and Good Hope Road, SE. This three-story, 63,000 square foot office building marks the first new construction in the Historic Anacostia neighborhood in 15 years.

The Anacostia Gateway office building, a \$19 million development, will offer 14,000 square feet of retail space, 49,000 square feet of Class A office and related space, and 112 sub-grade parking spaces. The construction of this office building is expected to last between 12 to 15 months.

This construction is historic because for too long this community has been neglected and absent from the prosperity that our city is experiencing. But on June 28, elected officials from the past and the present and partners from all sectors rallied around a common mission to lift up this community.

This groundbreaking represents my deep commitment to help bring new jobs, new retail and new investment to neighborhoods east of the Anacostia River. This is just one example of our continuous efforts to move forward in providing financial resources to boost economic revitalization throughout the entire city. It is part of the city's larger investment in East Washington development projects, including the Skyland Shopping Center, affordable housing developments and other mixed used projects.

The Quest for More Affordable Housing

Fairmont Apartments

The fight for affordable housing in our city continues to be a priority for my administration. With soaring housing prices in the District, I am firmly committed to giving all of our residents an opportunity to enjoy the benefits of home ownership.

Last week, I joined tenants at the Fairmont Apartments, an affordable housing complex in Columbia Heights, and tenants at the 1330 7th Street apartment complex in Northwest, to celebrate the rehabilitation of affordable housing in the District.

In FY 2003, the city's two housing agencies provided financial assistance for the acquisition and rehabilitation of Fairmont I & II Apartments, which is a 218-unit housing development located in Ward 1.

The tenants of Fairmont I & II Apartments formed a joint venture with developers KSI Services, Inc., and both organizations vowed to work to keep the apartments affordable after the renovation is complete. The DC Housing Finance Agency provided \$16.1 million in tax-exempt bonds and allocated \$8.4 million in Low-Income Housing Tax Credits for the property. In addition, the DC Department of Housing and Community Development also provided a \$4.75 million low-interest loan. The total development costs for the acquisition and renovation are estimated at \$30 million.

With the escalating costs of for-sale and rental housing in Columbia Heights, the HFA and its partners were able to renew the expiring Section 8 housing contract on the two five-story buildings and ensure the rental housing units remain affordable over the next 15 years.

The Quest for More Affordable Housing (Cont.)

1330 7th Street Apartments

We continued the celebration of the preservation of affordable housing at the 1330 7th Street apartment complex. Since 1972, this 10-story apartment building, formerly known as Immaculate Conception Apartments, has been home to low- and moderate-income families and individuals.

Through partnership with local developers, an extension of the Section 8 contract, financial assistance from the DC Housing Finance Agency and the city's Housing Production Trust Fund, the building underwent a \$21 million renovation and remains affordable. More than 96 percent of the units are affordable to low- and moderate-income families earning less than 60 percent of the Area Median Income, and 11 of the units are affordable to those earning up to 30 percent of the Area Median Income. The DC Housing Finance Agency provided \$13.6 million in tax-exempt bond financing and an allocation of Low-Income Housing Tax Credits for the property.

The Department of Housing and Community Development oversaw the \$2 million subordinate mortgage financing provided through the Housing Production Trust Fund, and the US Department of Housing and Urban Development approved a 20-year renewal of the Section 8 contract for the property.

I am convinced that when residents, developers and government officials work together, we can build a city that is affordable to residents of all income levels. We need to ensure that people can go into any ward of this city and find a place that they can afford and a place they want to call home.

Grand Opening of King Greenleaf Recreation Center

On June 21, I attended the grand opening of the King Greenleaf Recreation Center located at First and N streets, NW. King Greenleaf is a 16,500 square foot facility including an indoor gymnasium with seating capacity for 320 people, shower facilities, locker rooms and exercise room, an arts and crafts room, pantry, and a computer-learning center. The newly constructed facility replaces the recreation facility, which was housed in the lower level of the high-rise housing development. This freestanding facility offers an inviting facility for youth, families and seniors.

A lot of thought went into the design and architecture of this beautiful center. I'm proud that King Greenleaf is becoming a cornerstone for the community—it is fitting squarely into my vision for this neighborhood. Other components of that vision are the Southeast Federal Center; Washington Canal Park, and our planned ballpark for the Nationals, which will be within walking distance of this center.

I've always been a firm believer in the power of recreation centers. Deputy Mayor Neil Albert paved the way for our progress, and our new director of the DC Department of Parks and Recreation, Kimberley Flowers, is building on that progress. We're breaking ground soon on Trinidad Recreation Center in Northeast and Deanwood Recreation Center in Northeast. In fact, since 1999 we've opened or renovated 13 recreation centers throughout our city including: Harry Thomas; North Michigan Park; Southeast Tennis and Learning Center; Emery; Kennedy; Sherwood; Hillcrest; Ft Davis; Takoma; Parkview; and Bald Eagle.

I want to thank everyone in our community who helped make this new center a reality.



District Activities



Mayor Williams kicked off summer and the swimming pool season with his annual "cannonball dive" at the Anacostia Pool in Southeast Washington.



Mayor Williams along with Ward 8 Councilman Marion Barry and Butch Hopkins, President and CEO, Anacostia Economic Development Corp., break ground at the Anacostia Gateway Project in Southeast.



Mayor Williams and Congresswoman Eleanor Holmes Norton joined the tenants of 1330 7th Street Apartments to celebrate the completion of renovations and the preservation of affordability at this high-rise apartment building.

Community News

- [Mayor Williams Issues Statement Regarding Explosions in London Transit System](#)
- [Mayor, District Officials, Residents and Planners Kick-Off Community Design Workshop Series to Create Vision for Northwest One and Sursum Corda Neighborhood](#)
- [NCAA Selects Washington, DC, as Site for NCAA College Hockey 'Frozen Four' Championship](#)

[View All News Releases](#)

Upcoming Events

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| 7/15 | Mayor's Office on Asian and Pacific Islander Affairs Sidewalk Chalk Contest
"Chalk For Peace" Sidewalk Chalk Contest is a great opportunity for Asian and Pacific Islander youth to express their creativity and spice up their summer!
All Day
Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial Library
901 G Street NW |
| 8/2 | National Night Out
All Evening
Washington, DC |

